

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representatives Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica), Maurice Hinchey (D-Hurley) and John Hall (D-Dover Plains) urged the New York Public Service Commission (PSC) to carefully review a report released last week by the federal non-partisan Government Accountability Office (GAO) highlighting potential disadvantages of building new High-Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) power lines, such as the line proposed by New York Regional Interconnection (NYRI), along certain transportation rights-of-way.

“We are deeply concerned by NYRI’s refusal to consider viable alternatives to its proposed route and remain committed to ensuring that the PSC and New York State retain the ultimate authority in the approval and siting of electric transmission projects within New York,” Arcuri, Hall, and Hinchey wrote to PSC Chairman Garry Brown.

The text of the letter is attached below:

Garry A. Brown, Chairman
New York State Public Service Commission
3 Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12223-1350

By Mail and Facsimile: (518) 473-2838

Dear Chairman Brown:

We are writing to call your attention to a report released today by the non-partisan Government Accountability Office (GAO) assessing the issues associated with siting High-Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) transmission lines along transportation rights-of-way. We believe the report, which is the result of legislative language we were successful in adding to the 9/11 Implementation Act (P.L. 110-53), may be of special interest to the Public Service Commission, in light of the HVDC transmission line proposed by New York Regional Interconnection (NYRI).

The report cautions against collocating HVDC lines along railroad rights-of-way because of the potential for train derailments to damage transmission lines, noting that, “electromagnetic fields and stray current could interfere with railroad signaling systems.” Given that Upstate New York has seen a higher-than-average number of train derailments recently – including two in the last year in Madison County alone, it would seem ill-conceived to propose collocating a new HVDC transmission line along a railroad right-of-way in Upstate. We are deeply concerned by NYRI’s refusal to consider viable alternatives to its proposed route and remain committed to ensuring that the PSC and New York State retain the ultimate authority in the approval and siting of electric transmission projects within New York.

We are enclosing a copy of GAO’s report for your review. We greatly appreciate your work on this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact any one of us if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL A. ARCURI MAURICE D. HINCHEY JOHN HALL
Member of Congress Member of Congress Member of Congress

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